AMENDMENTS TO CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as indicated hereinafter.

1. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

> receiving, at a merge utility executing on a computer system, a request to merge a first merge document ~~that is~~ in a merge format with a second document in an original format;

> wherein the second document was created in said original format by a first document authoring application;

> in response to the request, the merge utility causing ~~converting a~~ the second document to be converted from ~~an~~ the original format to the merge format to create a second merge document;

> ~~wherein the second document was created by a first document authoring application;~~

> wherein the second merge document is in the merge format;

> wherein the step of converting is performed by either the merge utility or the first document authoring application;

> ~~using~~ the merge utility ~~executing on the computer system,~~ merging the first merge document and the second merge document to generate a composite merge document; and

> after generating the composite merge document, ~~delivering~~ the merge utility causing said composite merge document to be delivered to an output device;

> wherein the output device is a device that is different from the computer system;

> wherein the original format is a format that is not supported by the output device, and therefore needs to be converted to another format that is supported by the output device in order to be properly interpreted by the output device; and

> wherein the merge format is a format that is supported by the output device, and therefore does not need to be converted to another format that is supported by the output device in order to be properly interpreted by the output device;

> wherein the method is performed by one or more computing devices.

2. (original) The method of Claim 1 further comprising:

> generating the first merge document in said merge format by converting a first original
>> document from an original format to the merge format.

3. (original) The method of Claim1, wherein the merge format is Standard Printing and Imaging Format (SPIF).

4. (original) The method of Claim 3, wherein the merge format is PDL Postscript.

5. (original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the first document is a background template document and the second document is an overlay document.

6. (previously presented) The method of Claim 5,

> wherein the background template document is originally created by a second document
>> authoring application; and
> wherein the second document authoring application is different from said first document
>> authoring application.

7. (original) The method of Claim 5, wherein the background template document is created in a second original format and converted from the second original format to the merge format.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~7~~ 1, wherein <u>causing</u> ~~the conversion of~~ the second ~~original~~ document <u>to be converted from the original format</u> to the merge format ~~occurs at~~<u>comprises</u> the merge utility<u> converting the second document to the merge format</u>.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein ~~the converting of~~<u>causing</u> the second document <u>to be converted</u> from the original format to the merge format to create the second merge document includes:

> <u>the merge utility</u> generating, based on the original format, a set of conversion instructions
>> to convert the second document into said second merge document;
> passing the set of conversion instructions from the merge utility to the first document
>> authoring application; ~~and~~

wherein the conversion instructions, when interpreted by the first document authoring

application, cause the first document authoring application to ~~generating~~ generate

the second merge document based on said set of conversion instructions.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein ~~the method further comprises receiving, at the merge utility, a request to merge documents,~~ the request ~~containing~~ contains information about the first document authoring application, wherein ~~the converting of~~ causing the second document to be converted from the original format to the merge format to create the second merge document includes:

the merge utility generating, based on the information about the first document authoring

application, a set of conversion instructions to convert the second document into

said second merge document;

passing the set of conversion instructions from the merge utility to the first document

authoring application; and

wherein the conversion instructions, when interpreted by the first document authoring

application, cause the first document authoring application to ~~generating~~ generate

the second merge document based on said set of conversion instructions.

11. (original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the composite merge document is in the merge format.

12. (original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the composite merge document is a template for creating other documents.

13. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, ~~further comprising:~~

~~receiving, at the merge utility, a request to merge documents;~~

wherein the steps of ~~converting~~ causing the second document to be converted and

merging the first merge document and the second merge document are both

performed in response to the merge utility receiving the request to merge

documents.

14. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1 further comprising:

~~receiving, at the merge utility, a request to merge documents;~~

generating the first merge document in said merge format by converting a first original

    document from an original format to the merge format;

wherein the merge format is Standard Printing and Imaging Format (SPIF);

wherein the first document is a background template document and the second document

    is an overlay document;

wherein the background template document is originally created by a second document

    authoring application; and

wherein the second document authoring application is different from said first document

    authoring application;

wherein the background template document is created in a second original format and

    converted from the second original format to the merge format.

15. (Currently Amended) A machine-readable storage medium storing one or more sequences
of instructions, which when executed by one or more processors, causes:

receiving, at a merge utility executing on a computer system, a <u>request to merge a</u> first

    merge document ~~that is~~ in a merge format<u> with a second document in an original</u>

    <u>format</u>;

<u>wherein the second document was created in said original format by a first document</u>

    <u>authoring application;</u>

<u>in response to the request, the merge utility causing</u> ~~converting a~~ <u>the</u> second document <u>to</u>

    <u>be converted</u> from ~~an~~ <u>the</u> original format to the merge format to create a second

    merge document;

~~wherein the second document was created by a first document authoring application;~~

wherein the second merge document is in the merge format;

wherein the step of converting is performed by either the merge utility or the first

    document authoring application;

~~using~~ the merge utility ~~executing on the computer system,~~ merging the first merge

    document and the second merge document to generate a composite merge

    document; and

after generating the composite merge document, ~~delivering~~ <u>the merge utility causing</u> said

    composite merge document to <u>be delivered to</u> an output device;

wherein the output device is a device that is different from the computer system;

wherein the original format is a format that is not supported by the output device, and

therefore needs to be converted to another format that is supported by the output

device in order to be properly interpreted by the output device; and

wherein the merge format is a format that is supported by the output device, and therefore

does not need to be converted to another format that is supported by the output

device in order to be properly interpreted by the output device.

16. (previously presented) The machine-readable storage medium of Claim 15, wherein the one or more sequences of instructions, when executed by one or more processors, further causes:

generating the first merge document in said merge format by converting a first original

document from an original format to the merge format.

17. (previously presented) The machine-readable storage medium of Claim 15 wherein the merge format is Standard Printing and Imaging Format (SPIF).

18. (previously presented) The machine-readable storage medium of Claim 17 wherein the merge format is PDL Postscript.

19. (previously presented) The machine-readable storage medium of Claim 15 wherein the first document is a background template document and the second document is an overlay document.

20. (previously presented) The machine-readable storage medium of Claim 19,

wherein the background template document is originally created by a second document

authoring application; and

wherein the second document authoring application is different from said first document

authoring application.

21. (previously presented) The machine-readable storage medium of Claim 19 wherein the background template document is created in a second original format and converted from the second original format to the merge format.

22. (Currently Amended) The machine-readable storage medium of Claim ~~21~~ 15 wherein

causing ~~the conversion of~~ the second ~~original~~ document to be converted from the original format

to the merge format ~~occurs at~~comprises the merge utility converting the second document to the merge format.

23. (Currently Amended) The machine-readable storage medium of Claim 15 wherein ~~the converting of~~causing the second document to be converted from the original format to the merge format to create the second merge document includes:

the merge utility generating, based on the original format, a set of conversion instructions to convert the second document into said second merge document;

passing the set of conversion instructions from the merge utility to the first document authoring application; ~~and~~

wherein the conversion instructions, when interpreted by the first document authoring application, cause the first document authoring application to ~~generating~~generate the second merge document based on said set of conversion instructions.

24. (Currently Amended) The machine-readable storage medium of Claim 15 wherein the ~~one or more sequences of instructions, when executed by one or more processors, further causes receiving, at the merge utility, a~~ request ~~to merge documents, the request containing~~contains information about the first document authoring application, wherein ~~the converting of~~causing the second document to be converted from the original format to the merge format to create the second merge document includes:

the merge utility generating, based on the information about the first document authoring application, a set of conversion instructions to convert the second document into said second merge document;

passing the set of conversion instructions from the merge utility to the first document authoring application; and

wherein the conversion instructions, when interpreted by the first document authoring application, cause the first document authoring application to ~~generating~~generate the second merge document based on said set of conversion instructions.

25. (previously presented) The machine-readable storage medium of Claim 15 wherein the composite merge document is in the merge format.

26. (previously presented) The machine-readable storage medium of Claim 15 wherein the composite merge document is a template for creating other documents.

27. (Currently Amended) The machine-readable storage medium of Claim 15 ~~wherein the one or more sequences of instructions, when executed by one or more processors, further causes :~~

> ~~receiving, at the merge utility, a request to merge documents;~~
>> wherein the steps of ~~converting~~ causing the second document to be converted and merging the first merge document and the second merge document are both performed in response to the merge utility receiving the request to merge documents.

28. (Currently Amended) The machine-readable storage medium of Claim 15 wherein the one or more sequences of instructions, when executed by one or more processors, further causes :

> ~~receiving, at the merge utility, a request to merge documents;~~
> generating the first merge document in said merge format by converting a first original document from an original format to the merge format;
> wherein the merge format is Standard Printing and Imaging Format (SPIF);
> wherein the first document is a background template document and the second document is an overlay document;
> wherein the background template document is originally created by a second document authoring application; and
> wherein the second document authoring application is different from said first document authoring application;
> wherein the background template document is created in a second original format and converted from the second original format to the merge format.

29. (previously presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the first merge document is a version of a first document that has been converted from an original format to the merge format.

30.   (Canceled)

31. (previously presented) The machine-readable storage medium of Claim 15 wherein the first merge document is a version of a first document that has been converted from an original format to the merge format.

32. (Canceled)